

**Missouri Assessment Program**

**Communications Arts  
Practice Test**

**Grade 6**

**Student's Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print first name and last name)

**Teacher's Name** \_\_\_\_\_  
(please print first name and last name)

**School District** \_\_\_\_\_

**Building/Room** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Form 20**

**Do not open test booklet until instructed to do so.**

## *Nsue and the Honeyguide*

Retold by Sharon Howard

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Silently he crept through jagged thornbushes. Bare feet moved swiftly over hot, arid soil to the edge of a waterhole where the **kudu** was drinking. The great animal suddenly looked up, spiral horns curving sharply into the endless African sky. Nsue (neh-SOO-ee) did not reach for his pouch of poisoned arrows. He had no heart for killing. This would not be the day he would change his childish boyhood name.

Nsue left the salt pan and climbed the barren hillside to the cool twilight of the rock caves. Tonight would be the Festival of the New Moon, and Nsue had nothing to contribute to the feast. His sister, Nandi, had found four plump tsama melons to share.

Nsue lay on his back and studied the ancient paintings that lined the rock walls. It reminded him of the many stories that Gao, the Old One, told about the San people of long ago. In this harsh desert climate, everyone must hunt for food to survive. Gao's stories honored the brave hunters. Nsue wanted to hide in the caves until the stories were over. It was there that his father found him.

Nsue's father knew the reason for the boy's unhappiness. He had often heard the older boys teasing his son about his name. *Nsue* means "ostrich egg." He was given this name because when he was a baby in a sling on his mother's back, his shiny oval head looked just like an ostrich egg gleaming in the sun.

"Nsue is a fine name," his father said. "Ostrich eggs are of great value to our people. One egg can feed 12 hungry men. The empty shells are used to carry and store water. Even the broken pieces become tools or jewelry. Be proud of your name!"

Nsue turned his head away. "It is the name of a child, not a hunter," he cried. "I will never be a skilled hunter like you,

Father. I do not wish to kill the beautiful animals of our desert."

Nsue's father squatted on his heels and surveyed the vast Kalahari beyond. "The spirit gods did not intend for all men to be hunters," he said softly. "Some men tell stories around the cooking fires. Others paint our history on the walls of the rock caves. Men like Nxou are keepers of water. Without water, even the bravest hunters would soon die."

Despite his anxiety, Nsue had to smile as he thought of skinny Nxou pressing a dry reed through the sand in just the right place, drawing water to fill 15 ostrich eggs for tonight's celebration. "I will find something to share at the Festival of the New Moon," Nsue promised as he left the cave and walked into the shimmering heat.

In time, Nsue grew tired and stopped to rest in the shade of a thornbush. At first he thought the wind was playing tricks on his ears, but there it was again: "Nta-nta-nta-ntee!"

When he heard the excited cry of the honeyguide bird, Nsue leaped up and began to answer with the grunts and growls of the honey badger. As he ran along, he remembered the stories of Gao, who told of the bird who seeks out other creatures to invade the combs of honeybees.

Nsue ran like the desert wind, and eventually the honeyguide led him to the base of a baobab tree, standing like a lonely giant against the setting sun. The hollow tree revealed an opening, with bees buzzing angrily around the excited bird.

Nsue quickly tore a piece of fibrous bark from the base of the tree and began to climb. Without hesitation, he reached into the hollow center and dipped his scoop into a great comb of golden honey. He returned to the ground so quickly that only a few bees

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were able to avenge the intrusion with angry stings.

Although Nsue was in a hurry, he remembered Gao's words: "If you do not leave a portion of the comb for the honeyguide who brought you to this golden treasure, the next time it will lead you to a hungry lion instead of thick, sweet honey."

It was dark when Nsue returned, and the Dance of the New Moon had already begun. His heart sang more loudly than the

beautiful voices of the children. His face and arms were swollen from bee stings, but his lopsided grin was full of pride as he stepped forward and offered to share his golden prize.

As the music ended, his father announced, "From this day forward, my son shall be known to all as Ratel, the fierce and clever honey badger."

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1. Do you think “Nsue and the Honeyguide” is an appropriate title for this story? Use two details from the story to support your answer.

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2. Imagine that you are going to write a paper about the San people of the Kalahari. Write two different questions that you would use to guide your research.

Question 1:

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Question 2:

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3. Use details from the beginning and from the end of the story to explain how Nsue changed as a result of his experience.

Beginning: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

End: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Complete the chart by listing five major events in the story in the order that they happened.

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**Alternate Constructed Response Item**

Explain the importance to the San people of Nsue's contribution of honey for the Festival of the New Moon.

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**Circle the letter of the correct answer for Questions 5 and 6.**

5. A sentence from the passage states, "His heart sang more loudly than the beautiful voices of children." Which kind of figurative language is the author using here?
- A. alliteration
  - B. onomatopoeia
  - C. metaphor
  - D. personification
6. At the end of the passage, Nsue's "face and arms were swollen from bee stings, but his lopsided grin was full of pride." What does "lopsided" mean?
- A. rounded
  - B. faded
  - C. uneven
  - D. undeserved

### *Nsue and the Honeyguide*

7. Now you will write a paper in response to a writing prompt. First, read the prompt in the box below.

You will now have 45 minutes for your prewriting activities such as brainstorming, listing, outlining, and writing a rough draft. Use the pages in the test booklet labeled “prewriting” to record your ideas and your rough draft.

You will then have another 45 minutes in which to write your final paper. Use the pages in the test booklet labeled “final paper” to record your completed work.

**Celebrations are important to Nsue’s culture. Celebrations are also important in our country. Write a paper to your teacher describing an event or holiday that you celebrate and explain why it is important to you.**

## Prewriting

[illegible]

## Prewriting

[illegible]



## Prewriting

[illegible]

## Prewriting

[illegible]

## Prewriting

[illegible]

## Final Paper

[illegible]

## Final Paper

[illegible]

## Final Paper

[illegible]

## Final Paper

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